SUBJECT: **TEEN'S HAPPY HOMES, INC., A FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY AND GROUP HOME FOSTER CARE PROVIDER, ALLEGATION REVIEW**

At your request, we reviewed 20 allegations regarding Teen's Happy Homes, Inc. (Teen's or Agency), received from the Office of County Investigations, the First Supervisorial District, and three informants who were previously associated with Teen's. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Teen's to provide Foster Family Agency (FFA) services to recruit, certify, train, and support foster family homes. Teen's is also licensed to operate one group home (GH) with a resident capacity of six children. Teen's office and GH are located in the Second Supervisorial District.

Our review of the allegations was based primarily on an analysis of the Agency's financial activity during calendar year 2009, and interviews with Teen's management and staff. At the time of our review, Teen's had 202 children placed by Los Angeles County in 83 certified foster homes. DCFS paid the Agency between $1,430 and $1,865 per child per month, for a total of $3,341,685. Teen's paid $1,482,052 (44%) directly to the foster parents, which exceeds the State's minimum requirement of 40%.

In addition, DCFS and the Probation Department contract with Teen's to care for foster children placed in the Agency's home. DCFS paid Teen's $3,889 per child per month, based on a rate determined by the California Department of Social Services, for a total of $212,988 in GH foster care funds during 2009.

Summary of Findings

Most of the 20 allegations claimed that the Agency used foster care funds inappropriately. We substantiated five (25%) of the twenty allegations; partially

substantiated six (30%) allegations; and were unable to substantiate the remaining nine (45%) allegations.

The five substantiated allegations were that Teen's:

- Used foster care funds inappropriately to pay for the Executive Director's (ED) personal vehicle and credit card expenses, and other credit card expenditures without supporting documentation.
- Circumvented the Agency's payment approval process.
- Increased the ED salary, while other employees were placed on unpaid furloughs.
- Made inappropriate payments to a former foster child for supposed maintenance services while the former foster child was out of the State.

The six partially substantiated allegations were that Teen's:

- Made salary payments to the Operations Manager, who is also the ED's daughter, while she was absent due to a serious medical condition.
- Made unsupported payroll payments.
- Created a potentially stressful and hostile work environment by the ED's statements toward staff.
- Had an employee working two positions simultaneously.
- Misused taxpayer funds, including federal grant funds.

Details of our review are included in the attached report.

Review of Report

We met with representatives of Teen's on February 14, 2013 to discuss the results of our investigation. Teen's response (attached) indicates ……

We thank Teen's management and staff for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Robert Smythe at (213) 253-0101.

WLW:JLS:RS

Attachments

c: Philip L. Browning, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Beautina Robinson, Executive Director, Teen's Happy Homes
Board of Directors, Teen's Happy Homes

Teen's Happy Homes
Foster Family Agency and Group Home Foster Care Contractor
Allegations Review

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Teen's Happy Homes (Teen's or Agency) to provide Foster Family Agency (FFA) services to recruit, certify, train, and support foster family homes, and to care for foster children placed in the Agency's group home (GH).

We reviewed 20 allegations regarding Teen's, received from the Office of County Investigations, the First Supervisorial District, and three informants who were previously associated with Teen's. Our review of the allegations was based primarily on an analysis of the Agency's financial activity during calendar year 2009, and interviews with Teen's management and staff. Details of the results of our review of the allegations are discussed below.

> **Allegation 1 - The Operations Manager (OM), who is also the Executive Director's (ED) daughter, remained on the payroll and continued to receive a regular paycheck between June 2008 through most of 2010, after being diagnosed with a serious medical condition, and was not working because of her illness.**

The OM confirmed she was diagnosed with a serious medical condition in June 2008 that prevented her from working normal business hours. However, the OM indicated that she sometimes worked before or after established business hours. The Agency's Board of Directors approved the OM to work from home as necessary. We noted that the employee's timesheets indicated she generally worked between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., which is inconsistent with the employee's statements that she was unable to work during normal business hours. The OM could not provide a reasonable explanation for this discrepancy.

In addition, based on the job description for the OM position, it appears that the OM would have been unable to perform many of the duties (e.g., managing the day-to-day operations of the FFA office, managing the reception desk, maintaining and overseeing Foster Track, administrative functions, etc.) from home, or after business hours, as she claimed. Teen's FFA staff interviewed also indicated that, before the Agency moved to a new facility in September 2009, the OM's functions were performed by the FFA Administrator. The OM resumed responsibility of those functions when Teen's moved to the new facility. The OM provided emails written as early as July 2009, documenting her involvement in coordinating the Agency's move to the new facility, and purchasing equipment for the new space.

To document work performed prior to July 2009, Teen's provided copies of 24 cancelled Agency checks for vendor payments from June through October 2008 that they indicated were written by the OM. The handwriting on the checks appears to be consistent with the handwriting on four (50%) of eight of the OM's timesheets reviewed

for the same period. However, the handwriting on the other four timesheets is different. Agency staff indicated that these timesheets were completed by a clerk on behalf of the OM because she was too ill to complete the timesheets. The OM's inability to complete some of her timesheets brings into question her ability to perform her other duties during those periods.

To document additional work before July 2009, the OM provided work-related emails that she asserts she responded to. The emails were sent by various parties addressed to the OM's mother, the ED, at her mother's personal email account. The OM indicated she used her mother's email account because she did not have a work email account. However, the OM did not provide the responses to any of the emails, or any other evidence that she responded to the emails during the period in question.

Teen's management also indicated that the OM trained their in-house bookkeeper. We confirmed with the bookkeeper that she was trained by the OM when she started working for the Agency. However, the bookkeeper started working for Teen's in February 2008, before the OM became ill.

Finally, we noted that the OM's personnel file did not have a 2009 performance evaluation. Management provided a 2009 evaluation after we brought this to their attention, but the evaluation was not consistent with her prior evaluations. Specifically, the 2009 evaluation was completed and signed by the OM's mother, the ED, while all of her prior evaluations were prepared by the FFA Administrator.

Conclusion: The allegation was partially substantiated. The OM was diagnosed with an illness in June 2008 that prevented her from working during normal business hours until June 2009. While the OM provided some limited evidence of work done before July 2009, staff interviews and other evidence only document work she performed after July 2009, and that she was present at the facility beginning in September 2009.

The OM was paid $3,813 a month between June 2008 through June 2009. We could not substantiate the employee earned the full-time wages paid to her during this period because of the minimal work-product provided, and because it is unlikely the OM would have been able to perform a significant portion of her job responsibilities from home, since her job description requires her to address day-to-day facility operations.

Allegation 2 - The Agency paid the $10,000 down payment on the ED's personal vehicle, a Toyota Venza, which is not used for Agency business, and pays the vehicle loan payments and insurance.

The ED confirmed that the Toyota Venza is her personal vehicle. We noted that the Agency paid a total of $23,032 for the down payment, warranty, 2009 monthly payments, insurance, and satellite radio for the vehicle. Agency management indicated the Agency was making the vehicle payments for the ED to repay loans the ED had made to the Agency dating back to 2003. However, the Agency was unable to provide documentation that the Agency owed the ED any money, such as loan agreements, or

bank statements showing that the loans from the ED were deposited into the Agency's bank account.

Conclusion: The allegation was substantiated. The Agency paid the ED's personal vehicle expenses.

Allegation 3 - The ED's daughter (also the OM) was paid $1,000 for mileage reimbursement, even though she never drove for Agency business, and while the OM was not working because of her medical condition (see Allegation 1).

We reviewed all mileage payments from June 2008 through December 2010, and noted there were no mileage payments made to the OM during that period. We also reviewed all non-payroll payments to the OM for $1,000 or more during calendar year 2009, and noted one $1,096 reimbursement for office supplies. The reimbursement was supported by a receipt.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. We did not identify any mileage reimbursements to the OM.

Allegation 4 - The disbursement approval process was circumvented by the ED and the President of the Agency's Board of Directors (Board). Required forms, such as the Check Requisition form, and required authorizing signatures were not obtained.

Teen's does not have written policies and procedures for approving disbursements. The Agency does have a form to authorize disbursements, which has areas for the signatures of the preparer, the Administrator approving the purchase, and the ED's approval. However, 47 (59%) of 80 expenditures reviewed did not have original required signatures on the forms. The preparer's and Administrator's signatures appeared to be photocopied, and were not original. The ED's approval was a facsimile signature from a rubber stamp which is kept by the bookkeeper.

Conclusion: The allegation was substantiated. The Agency did not have appropriate approval signatures for 47 (59%) of 80 expenditures reviewed.

Allegation 5 - The Agency's Board President is fully aware of the Agency's financial mismanagement and may be benefitting from it. The Agency pays the Board President's Sprint cell phone bill.

The Agency does not have an established cell phone policy. We noted that Teen's pays cell phone bills from Sprint and T-Mobile for five Agency phones, and also pays the FFA Administrator's and the GH Facility Manager's personal cell phone bills without differentiating between personal and business calls. However, we did not see any payments for the Board President's cell phone. We did note that the ED was assigned three cell phones, one of which had no activity. It is not clear why the ED needs three

cell phones. We also could not determine if $2,314 in charges for four cell phone bills reviewed were all Agency related, reasonable, or necessary.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. We could not confirm that the Agency was paying for the Board President's cell phone. However, we noted that the Agency's cell phone expenditures appeared to be excessive.

Allegation 6 - The ED issued a check for approximately $1,000 or $1,500, to an employee who had resigned, and was moving to Puerto Rico. The payment was allegedly for appliances and furniture that the ED bought from the employee, to be used at the ED's personal residence, and the ED's old appliances/furniture were placed at the GH. The informant did not know if the check was payable to the former employee, or to a furniture store.

We did not identify non-payroll payments to the employee in question, or furniture-related payments in the amounts indicated. However, we did find a $1,082 credit card charge for a gas range purchased from Lowe's Home Improvement. The Agency claimed the gas range was purchased for the GH. However, the item description on the credit card statement and store receipt did not match the gas range we observed at the GH. The ED claimed that the gas range described on the receipt was exchanged for the range observed at the GH, and claimed that the store failed to update the receipt with the correct item description.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. We did not identify any non-payroll payments to the former employee in question. However, we did note that the Agency used foster care funds to purchase a gas range for the GH that was not in use at the GH. We were unable to locate the range.

Allegation 7 - The ED uses an Agency MasterCard and does not have receipts to support purchases made with this card. In addition, the ED and Administrator misuse the American Express card.

In calendar year 2009, Teen's made payments totaling $195 to Capital One, and $17,486 to American Express. Since the payments to the Capital One credit card were immaterial, we did not review supporting documentation for these purchases. However, our review of the American Express payments identified $5,671 in questionable expenditures, including $1,905 in expenditures without original itemized invoices/receipts to document that the expenditures were FFA/GH-related, and $3,766 in personal and other non-Program related travel expenditures made by the ED. The ED reimbursed the Agency $1,300 for her personal travel expenditures, and we verified the ED used her personal funds to reimburse the Agency. In addition, as a result of our review, the Agency reimbursed the FFA Program $1,302 for the non-Program related travel expenditures. However, Teen's did not provide documentation to substantiate the source of the funds used to reimburse the Program. The Agency also did not indicate

why the ED did not reimburse the Agency for the remaining personal, non-Program related expenditures.

Conclusion: The allegation was substantiated. We identified $5,671 in questionable expenditures on the Agency's American Express card, including $1,905 in unsupported expenditures, and $3,766 in inappropriate personal and non-Program related travel expenditures.

Allegation 8 - The Agency's Board approved an $18,000 salary raise for the ED. The Agency's employees were then put on unpaid leave from December 28 to January 2, and then the Agency implemented furloughs.

We confirmed the ED received a $1,667 increase to her monthly salary effective September 1, 2009, an annual increase of $20,000. We reviewed the Board meeting minutes, and verified that the increase was approved by the Agency's Board. The minutes did not specify the reason(s) for the increase. It should be noted that, even with the salary increase, the ED's salary was reasonable based on the 2009 edition of the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Salary Study.

We also confirmed that all Agency employees were placed on unpaid leave from December 28, 2009 to January 2, 2010, and were placed on one-day per month unpaid furloughs in calendar year 2010. The ED indicated the Agency implemented the furloughs because the State reduced its funding to the Agency.

Conclusion: The allegation was substantiated. The ED received a salary raise, while the Agency employees were placed on unpaid leave, and one-day per month unpaid furloughs.

Allegation 9 - The Agency paid the ED's former foster child for maintenance services while he was out of the State.

We confirmed that the Agency paid the ED's former foster child a total of $2,700 from January to September 2009 ($300 per month), for janitorial/maintenance services at the FFA. However, during this same period, the former foster child was attending a university in Alabama, and therefore, could not have provided the services for which he was paid.

The Agency claims the foster child provided services during his winter and summer vacations. Teen's provided photocopies of invoices for January, and for May through August 2009, to support $1,500, or five months of payments made to the foster child, and indicated that they overpaid the foster child $1,200. However, the photocopied invoice received for August 2009 was inconsistent with the invoice we reviewed for the same month during our initial investigation. Specifically, the photocopy did not include the ED's approval signature, whereas the invoice originally reviewed did have the ED's signature, and the stamp to indicate the invoice was paid was in a different location than the original copy. Finally, the Agency paid the foster child for the full month of January

and August, even though winter and summer breaks ended on January 14 and August 19, 2009, respectively.

In December 2012, Teen's ED purchased a $1,200 cashier's check, with funds she indicated were recovered from the former foster child for the overpayment. We verified that the cashier's check was deposited into the Agency's bank account. However, we were unable to verify the source of the funds.

Conclusion: The allegation was substantiated. The Agency inappropriately paid a former foster child for janitorial/maintenance services when he was out of the State, and therefore, could not have performed the services for which he was paid.

Allegation 10 - The Agency denied a foster child's request for medicine because it alleged it did not have any funds to pay for it. Since the Agency does not have funds to pay for important items such as medicine, the informant wondered if there might be possible ghost employees depleting the Agency's funds.

We were unable to determine if a child had been denied medication because the allegation did not provide the name of the child, the time period, or any other information about the incident. However, DCFS received a similar allegation in 2008, and their investigation concluded that the child received the needed medication.

Teen's does not pay for medical/dental visits or prescription drugs for its clients because the clients are covered by Medi-Cal. If a child does not have a Medi-Cal number before placement, and an emergency Medi-Cal number cannot be obtained from DCFS, the foster parent would be required to pay for the care, and work with the County Social Worker to get reimbursed. California Manual of Policies and Procedures Section 88069.2 requires FFAs to ensure placed children receive medical and dental care by a qualified physician or medical clinic. Based on Teen's policies, children could go without medicine or medical treatment if the child does not have a Medi-Cal number, and the foster parent does not have the money to pay for the medicine or medical needs. Teen's needs to ensure that its policies are consistent with State requirements, and that all clients receive medical and/or dental care.

We did note that, in 2009, Teen's paid $19,200 in wages to the Executive Director of another group home, as a Teen's GH employee. Although this person was listed as an employee on a 2008 personnel report Teen's submitted to the State and DCFS, the GH Administrator, who has worked in that capacity since July 2008, did not have knowledge of this person working for Teen's. In addition, Teen's did not have a personnel file for the individual, and the Agency did not have any work product from this individual for the period in question.

As part of our review of Teen's ED's emails, we observed the ED corresponded with this individual during 2008 for what appeared to be general program and mentoring program issues. While the correspondence establishes a connection between this individual and

Teen's during 2008, the absence of a personnel file, or knowledge of the individual's employment by the GH Administrator, and lack of work-product, calls into question the appropriateness of the payments made to this individual during 2009 as a GH employee.

Conclusion: The allegation was partially substantiated. While we could not determine if a child was denied access to medication, it is possible that a child may be unable to access medical care if the child does not have Medi-Cal.

We also noted that the Agency paid $19,200 in wages to an individual whose employment at the GH is questionable based on available documentation and other evidence. The Agency did not have a personnel file for the individual, and the GH Administrator during this period did not have any knowledge of the individual or any work they did for the Agency. In addition, the Agency could not produce any work done by the individual.

Allegation 11 - The Agency's blatant lack of support to its children and families albeit financial, recreational, and case management necessitated justifications.

It is unclear what the allegation of "necessitated justifications" means. However, Teen's GH has had a total of four Program monitoring reviews by the Auditor-Controller's (A-C) Countywide Contract Monitoring Division (CCMD) and DCFS since 2009. The reports noted weaknesses in assessing children's needs timely, completing comprehensive Needs and Service Plans (NSPs), and obtaining DCFS' approval of the NSPs. Other issues included ensuring the GH was in good repair, and that staff met all the education/experience requirements. However, children interviewed in these reviews reported feeling safe, having received good care and appropriate services, being comfortable in their environment, and being treated with respect and dignity. In one instance, a child indicated that a staff person's personal problems affected their work. The most recent report (dated August 23, 2012) noted that the GH was clean and well-maintained, and the NSP issues identified were limited to ensuring children were progressing toward meeting the NSP case goals.

Teen's FFA has also undergone two Program monitoring reviews by CCMD and DCFS since 2009, with the most recent report issued August 10, 2012 by DCFS. The reports cited documentation deficiencies in certified foster homes, staff training, and NSPs. Other issues included physical plant deficiencies, security over cleaning solutions at a foster parent's home, and lack of disaster drills at two foster parents' homes. Again, the reports indicated that the foster parents and children interviewed stated that they received good care, support, and services, which was evident in the relationships formed between the FFA staff, foster parents, and the placed children.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. Although the monitoring reports noted some deficiencies with the Agency's programs, the reports also indicate that, in general, families and children were satisfied with the services that Teen's provided.

Allegation 12 - The unqualified Human Resource (HR) Director inappropriately interferes in the daily clinical-related child and family case management activities of social workers and supervising staff.

The HR Director's résumé indicates she has over 20 years of experience in HR.

We interviewed five employees, four social workers, and an Administrator who have worked at Teen's for two or more years to determine if the HR Director had interfered in child and family case management activities. Only one respondent, a social worker, felt that the HR Director had interfered with his case management activities on one occasion. Based on the interview, and correspondence in the employee's personnel file, the incident took place during a meeting between the employee, the employee's supervisor, and the HR Director, to address job expectations and performance issues. While the employee's case management and clinical work were discussed, the alleged interference was limited to the timely submission of work, which is a performance issue.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. There was no evidence that the HR Director had interfered with the child and family case management activities of social workers and supervising staff.

Allegation 13 - Repeated, reckless, and random statements from the ED towards staff about her power to "fire" staff at her whim, pleasure, and discretion, contribute to the stress of workers, and create a hostile work environment.

We interviewed five employees at Teen's, and all of them said that the ED has made statements reminding them that they are at-will employees, and that she has the authority to discipline staff who do not meet her expectations. However, none of the employees interviewed felt the ED's statements created a hostile work environment. Staff attributed the ED's behavior to a personality trait.

We did note that Teen's received stress complaints from eight employees in July 2010. According to a memo to Teen's Board from Teen's HR, the stress claims were a result of policy changes made by Teen's that included the implementation of a furlough day, and work schedule changes that required social workers to work in the office. The complaints came from six social workers and two supervising social workers. According to the memo, one of the employees rescinded their complaint during HR's investigation, claiming pressure from other employees to file the complaint. As of August 2012, only the employee who rescinded his complaint continues to work at Teen's.

Conclusion: The allegation is partially substantiated. According to staff interviewed, the ED is known to make statements to employees regarding their at-will status, and her authority to discipline her employees. However, the employees interviewed did not report feeling that this created a hostile work environment.

Allegation 14 – Teen's misuses and mismanages taxpayer funds allotted to foster children and families.

In 2009, we determined that Teen's paid its foster parents 44% of the Program funds it received through its FFA contract with the County, which exceeds the California Department of Social Services requirements of 40%. In addition, our review of the most recent Program monitoring reports disclosed no material issues related to compliance with Program requirements that might have been the result of mismanagement or misuse of FFA contract funds.

However, as noted above, it appears that Teen's does not consistently expend its County contract funds on reasonable and allowable expenses, and in some instances has misused funds (i.e., continuing to pay the OM while she was out on medical leave and not working; paying a former foster child for work not performed; making payroll disbursements to an individual unknown to the GH Administrator who did not have a personnel file, or evidence of work product, etc.). In our December 10, 2003 fiscal review report, we identified $26,244 in unallowable, undocumented, or inadequately documented expenses, which is also evidence that contract funds are not consistently expended for reasonable and allowable purchases. It should be noted that Teen's has repaid the $26,244 in questioned costs identified in our report.

Conclusion: The allegation was partially substantiated. We noted some instances where Teen's had misspent contract funds. However, Teen's complied with the State's minimum requirement for payments to foster families, and the County's monitoring reports did not identify material instances of non-compliance with Program requirements, that might have been the result of the misuse or mismanagement of contract funds.

Allegation 15 – Teen's Board and the ED have an intransigent and "out of touch" attitude towards staff's requests, and suggestions to improve the lives of the children and families, and work conditions within the Agency.

Our review of the minutes for six Board meetings noted discussions about implementing a suggestion box in Teen's FFA office, providing training to staff, investigating allegations of abuse, and incorporating a mentoring program for placed children. In addition, we noted that only one (14%) of Teen's seven Board members during 2009 was an interested party (Agency employee). The State requires that no more than 49% of the persons serving on an agency's Board of Directors be interested parties (i.e., agency employees, related to agency employees, etc.). Accordingly, Teen's Board appeared to be independent.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. Board meeting minutes suggest that the Board has taken some proactive steps to address the needs of both the children it serves and its employees. The Board also appears to be independent.

Allegation 16 - Staff were instructed to complete timesheets as a result of our review. Timesheets were not done otherwise.

We reviewed 12 employees' timesheets, including the ED's. Based on our initial sample, we only noted discrepancies with the ED's timesheets. We expanded our sample to include a review of all of the ED's timesheets for both the GH and FFA Programs for calendar year 2009. We noted a total of 660 hours of overlapping time worked on the FFA and GH Programs. For example, on her FFA timesheet the ED reported working from 8:30a.m. to 5:00p.m. However, for the same day, the ED reported working from 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on the GH Program. In addition, the ED's signature on some of the timesheets for each Program appeared to be different, which suggests they may not have been signed by the ED. It is unclear if these discrepancies were because the timesheets were prepared to comply with our requests.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. We could not verify that the employees were instructed to complete timesheets because of our review. However, we noted significant discrepancies in the hours reported by the ED, and authorizing signatures.

Allegation 17 - As a budget cutting measure, Teen's did not have a full-time FFA Administrator. The GH Administrator split her time between the Agency's FFA and GH Programs, in direct violation of County and State staffing requirements.

We noted that the GH Administrator was employed to work full-time as a Supervising Social Worker, and part time (20 hours a week) as the GH Administrator. The employee worked 60 hours a week, and the salary paid to the employee for working both positions was reasonable based on the CWLA Study.

We did not identify any County or State requirements that prohibit an employee from working simultaneously in two positions. The California Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures (CDSS MPP) allows agency administrators to serve multiple personnel roles, provided the employee is qualified for the position, and is on the premises for the number of hours necessary to properly manage and administer the facility. In addition, we confirmed with State Community Care Licensing (CCL) that there are no other regulations that prohibit an employee from serving multiple roles.

Although the employee did not meet the requirements of the Supervising Social Worker position, we confirmed that Teen's received an exception from the State to allow this individual to work in this capacity.

Conclusion: The allegation is partially substantiated. We confirmed that the GH Administrator also worked as a Supervising Social Worker for Teen's FFA Program. However, working two positions simultaneously is not a violation of any County or State requirements.

Allegation 18 – The ED has publicly let it be known that she is affiliated with several DCFS and County top-level officials, who have always assisted her in avoiding fiscal audits and oversight.

While it is unclear if the ED has made these statements, the A-C Audit Division, A-C CCMD, and DCFS conduct ongoing fiscal and program reviews of FFA and GH contract providers based on an evaluation of each agency's performance and risk. The A-C and DCFS have conducted numerous audits and monitoring reviews of Teen's, so we found no evidence of any interference with reviews of the Agency.

Conclusion: The allegation is not substantiated. The A-C and DCFS decide which agencies to review based on performance and risk. There have been no requests from DCFS or other County officials to forego scheduled reviews of Teen's or any other agency.

Allegation 19 – The Agency received money for a mentoring program from a federal grant, but does not provide mentoring services.

We confirmed that Teen's received funding to operate a Mentoring Program. The Agency received some of its funding from the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ), which received its funding from the federal Department of Justice (DOJ). These funds should be used to provide mentoring to teenage males served by the foster care system.

Since the County is not funding this program, we could not determine if mentoring services were provided in accordance with the grant requirements. As a result, we forwarded the allegation to the DOJ. We also attempted to provide NAFJ with the allegation for their review, but they have not responded.

Conclusion: The allegation was partially substantiated. We confirmed the Agency received funds to operate a Mentoring Program during the review period. However, since the County does not fund the Mentoring Program, we have forwarded the allegation to the DOJ for their review and investigation.

Allegation 20 – The Agency refuses to address safety hazards at the foster parents' homes.

DCFS' monitoring of Teen's in 2008 and 2009 did not identify any safety hazards at the foster parents' homes. The 2010 report indicated that several foster homes had not obtained the necessary clearances for all adults who resided in the homes. Teen's resolved the issues, and did not have to provide DCFS with a corrective action plan.

The A-C's April 14, 2009 FFA Program monitoring report noted that one of six of the foster homes visited did not adequately secure cleaning solutions. Teen's corrective action plan indicated that Teen's visited all the homes to ensure that cleaning solutions and other toxic items were inaccessible to children. Teen's also instructed its social

workers to monitor their homes for compliance, and indicated they would review for compliance quarterly. DCFS' August 10, 2012 FFA Program monitoring report did not identify any safety hazards related to storage of cleaning solutions. However, the report did note a standing freezer chest in one certified home that did not have a lock, which could pose a safety hazard to children. Teen's satisfactorily resolved the issue, and did not have to provide DCFS with a corrective action plan.

Conclusion: The allegation was not substantiated. A-C and DCFS monitoring reviews did note a few safety hazards in some of Teen's foster parents' homes. However, it appears that these hazards were corrected. In addition, Teen's corrective action plans indicate that Teen's social workers will monitor their foster parent homes to identify safety hazards, and that Teen's will conduct quarterly reviews for compliance with safety hazard requirements.